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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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Summary of Conclusions for
 Meeting of the NSC Principals Committee

DATE: March 17, 1995

LOCATION: White House Situation Room

TIME: 2:30 - 4:00pm

SUBJECT: Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting
 on Bosnia and Croatia (S)

PARTICIPANTS:

Chair
 Anthony Lake

USUN
 Madeleine Albright

OVP
 Leon Fuerth

CIA
 Douglas MacEachin

State
 Secretary Christopher
 Robert Frasure

JCS
 General John Shalikashvili

DOD
 Secretary Perry

White House
 Samuel Berger

OMB
 Alice Rivlin

NSC
 Alexander Vershbow

Summary of ConclusionsFormer Yugoslavia Policy Review

1. Principals discussed overall U.S. strategy toward the former Yugoslavia and steps to prevent or contain renewed war in Bosnia this spring. They agreed that, in view of our limited leverage and the importance of maintaining the cohesion of NATO, we should maintain our current approach of diplomatic engagement, provision of humanitarian relief, keeping UNPROFOR in place, and measures to contain the conflict. Principals agreed that we should continue to support the Bosnian Government's goal of a political settlement consistent with the Contact Group proposal, but that we should seek to lower public expectations of immediate success; we should also avoid nurturing any illusions on the part of the

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Bosnian Government that we can deliver a settlement or that the U.S. or NATO will intervene militarily on their behalf. (S)

2. As a means to revive diplomatic efforts, Principals agreed that the U.S. Contact Group representative should explore the possibility of an agreement on constitutional arrangements for the future Bosnian union as a basis for securing Milosevic's recognition of Bosnia. (Action: State) They also agreed that additional options should be developed for using sanctions to increase the isolation of the Bosnian and Krajina Serbs.

(Action: OVP) In the meantime, the Contact Group offer of sanctions relief in return for mutual recognition of Bosnia and Croatia should remain on the table, notwithstanding Milosevic's negative response to date. (S)

3. Principals agreed that we should seek to prevent or contain a reescalation of fighting in Bosnia as the end of the cessation of hostilities approaches. To this end, we should urge the Bosnians to exercise restraint by arguing that we see little prospect that they will improve their situation on the battlefield, that diplomatic efforts have not yet run their course, and that we remain committed to the goal of a political settlement that preserves Bosnia as a single state within its existing borders. We should, at the same time, give them incentives toward restraint by continuing to support the Bosniac-Croat Federation politically and economically. (S)

4. Principals discussed ways to restore UN and NATO credibility in order to deter new Bosnian Serb military attacks on the eastern enclaves and other areas. They agreed that the Interagency Working Group should look at the possibility of using NATO air power against Serb air defense sites around Bihac, both to enable the U.S. and NATO to conduct humanitarian air drops in that region and to discourage Serb efforts to strangle Srebrenica and other safe areas. The IWG should also consider options for enhancing the protection of other safe areas, such as the establishment of exclusion zones. These options should be developed with a view toward the possible launch of a U.S. initiative in the second week of April. (Action: IWG) (S)

Next Steps on Croatia

5. Principals discussed the follow-up to President Tudjman's March 12 agreement with the Vice President to work on the mandate for a new UN peacekeeping force in Croatia. They agreed that efforts should continue to complete negotiations by the end of the month on a UNSC mandate for the new force. They noted the continuing difficulties reported by Ambassador Albright with the Croatians on defining a realistic understanding of the mission of "controlling" the international borders. (S)

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Step Two of NATO Prepositioning

6. Principals discussed the scaled-back or "mini" prepositioning option that had been developed by the NATO Military Authorities in response to some Allies' reluctance to support a larger prepositioning force. The scaled-back option consists of 80 personnel, including up to 20 Americans, who would be deployed to Croatia to set up a communications system to support UNPROFOR withdrawal from Bosnia or Croatia, should it become necessary. Principals decided to recommend to the President that he authorize U.S. representatives to support a decision at NATO to implement the scaled-back prepositioning option, including the deployment of up to 20 U.S. personnel to Croatia, following notification of Congress on Monday, March 20. They further agreed to provide Congress fuller briefings on March 22 by an interagency team. Principals agreed that, in informing Congress, we would characterize this as a limited, precautionary move that is being taken even though we oppose UNPROFOR withdrawal. (Action: NSC/DOD) ~~(S)~~

7. Noting that the larger prepositioning option (1800 total personnel, 440 U.S., 310 of which would be in Croatia) is still an active option at NATO, Principals also agreed to recommend to the President that he authorize U.S. representatives to agree to form the larger prepositioning force and to conduct training in Germany. The actual deployment of these additional U.S. personnel to Croatia would be subject to another Principals and NAC decision. (Action: NSC) ~~(S)~~

OPLAN 40104 Approval Process

8. Principals agreed to seek time on the President's schedule to brief him on NATO OPLAN 40104 that covers U.S. participation in UNPROFOR withdrawal from Bosnia or Croatia. (Action: NSC) They discussed the difficulties we will face in obtaining Congressional authorization and funding for the operation, as reflected in the recent letter from Senators Dole, Helms et al. on the subject. They agreed that, in spite of the difficulties, the scope of the operation argues in favor of seeking Congressional authorization and funding prior to making a commitment of U.S. troops to the operation. ~~(S)~~